



Governor's Workforce Board
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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Local Plan

Greater Rhode Island Local Area

Submitted by

State Workforce Development Board

[Acting as Local Board for the Greater Rhode Island Area
under Authority Granted by the US Secretary of Labor]

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024

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Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

Please answer the questions in Section 1 in eight (8) pages or less. The Department of Labor and Training's Labor Market Information Division can assist in developing responses to the questions 1.1 through 1.3 below. See Local Plan References and Resources.

1.1 An analysis of the economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. This section should align with the industries and businesses identified in the state plan, including the industry clusters outlined in the state's economic development strategy - "Rhode Island Innovates" reports I and II. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)]

The greater Rhode Island area is comprised of 37 cities and towns with a total combined estimated population of 796,706 (2018). Population growth in the region has been relatively flat since in recent years, with minor increases as compared to population totals in 2010 (794,138) and 2000 (795,432). Approximately 75.4% of all Rhode Islanders lived in the Greater Rhode Island area in 2018.

In February 2020, the region's unemployment rate was 3.9% - the region has experienced a year of almost uninterrupted monthly unemployment under 4%. Only two months later, in April 2020, the region's unemployment rate had reached a record 17.4%. The economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have been severe and widespread.

By September 2020, the unemployment rate in the region was 9.4% with a labor force of 429,446 individuals, total employment of 389,131 and total unemployment of 40,315. Within the region, unemployment rates varied from a high of 14.1% in Central Falls and 13.7% in Woonsocket to a low of 5.5% in Jamestown and 5.3% in New Shoreham (Block Island).

Analysis by the state's Labor Market Information division provides distribution of employment by industry for Rhode Island for the first quarter of 2020. Health Care and Social Assistance comprise the largest share of employment in the region, employing 48,723 individuals, accounting for roughly 15% of total private (no-governmental) employment. The second largest sector in the region is Retail Trade, employing 35,247 individuals, accounting for roughly 12.% of private employment. Accommodation & Food Services combine to form the third largest employment sector in the region, employing 34,248 individuals, accounting for 10% of the region's employment.

Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training	
City and Town - 2020 First Quarter Quarterly Census of U.I. Covered Employment and Wages	
Sector	Employment
Total Private & Government	327,022
Total Private Only	287,246
Health Care & Social Assistance	48,723
Retail Trade	35,247
Accommodation & Food Services	34,248
Manufacturing	32,498
Finance & Insurance	20,825
Administrative Support & Waste Mngmnt.	17,759
Professional & Technical Services	17,039
Construction	14,796
Other services (except Public Admin.)	11,962
Wholesale Trade	11,803
Management of Companies & Enterprises	9,869
Transportation & Warehousing	9,659
Educational Services	8,222
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	4,978
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	4,206
Information	3,826
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	698
Utilities	619
Mining	172
Unclassified Establishments	96

The 2018 annual average private sector wage was \$50,280 in Greater Rhode Island, an increase of \$896 (+1.8%) from the 2017 annual wage. Management of Companies & Enterprises led all of Greater Rhode Island's employment sectors with a 2018 annual wage of \$123,367. The Finance & Insurance sector reported the second highest private sector annual wage of \$93,204, followed by Information (\$78,919), Wholesale Trade (\$77,277) and Professional & Technical Services (\$75,355) sectors. The lowest annual average private sector wages were reported in Accommodation & Food Services (\$20,898) followed by Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation (\$31,760), Other Services (\$32,059) and Retail Trade (\$32,852).

The 2018 annual statewide private sector wage was \$51,747 or \$1,467(+2.9%) more than the Greater Rhode Island 2018 private sector wage.

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics Program, USDOL

In the fall and winter of 2015–2016, the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation commissioned a comprehensive study of the Rhode Island economy and its current and projected industry demand. The Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings worked in association with Battelle Technology Partnership Practice (now TEconomy Partners, LLC) and Monitor Deloitte to advance a new competitive strategy for the state of Rhode Island. This project's final conclusions, entitled "Rhode Island Innovates" found that Rhode Island possesses unique assets for building an advanced economy that works for all but stands weakened by the decline of its core "advanced industries." Given that erosion, the report asserts that five "advanced industry" and two "opportunity industry" growth areas hold out solid potential for growth in Rhode Island. These subsectors are categorized as 'Advanced' — including biomedical innovation, cyber and data analytics, maritime technology and manufacturing, advanced business services, and design and custom manufacturing – as well as 'Opportunity' – including Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics, and Arts, Education, Hospitality, and Tourism

In follow-up to the 2015 report, in 2019 the Commerce Corporation engaged New Localism Associates, City Facilitators and Quartz to assess the performance of the state's advanced economy between 2016 and 2019 as well as the impact of the policies and programs enacted in as a result of the Brookings report. The Commerce Corporation also directed the team to recommend an updated economic strategy going forward. That analysis, entitled "Rhode Island Innovates 2.0" reinforced the previously identified "advanced industry" and "opportunity industry" growth areas, and also identified two additional subsectors – the blue (ocean/coastal technology) economy and wind energy- and one business function concentration - back office (administrative support functions for large firms) - that play to the state's strengths and offer additional areas of opportunity for the Rhode Island economy.

A snapshot of all ten subsectors and business concentrations are described below:

- **Biomedical Innovation:** This growth area advances scientific knowledge of biological processes and systems in ways that are reshaping the diagnosis and treatment of disease. These advances converge with technological developments in electronics, information technology, imaging, and nanosciences to offer new insights that inform the creation and improvement of various biomedical products. Rhode Island has particularly strong market opportunities in neuroscience-related therapeutics; medical devices for orthopedic, biosensing, and neurological applications; and health care informatics and digital innovations

- **IT / Software, Cyber-Physical Systems, and Data Analytics:** As the world transitions into the next phase of the information technology revolution, a range of technologies—including wireless communications, sensing and imaging data, and the Internet of Things—are converging with rising demand for technologies and applications capable of storing, processing, and analyzing large, complex datasets to inform real-time decisions. Specific opportunities for the state include cyber-physical systems and data analytics, autonomous underwater vehicles, remote medical device monitoring systems, environmental and energy monitoring, and smart grid infrastructure
- **Defense Shipbuilding and Maritime:** Rhode Island is home to a wide range of maritime industry activities, including boat building, defense-related ship and submarine building, ocean cartography and engineering, and marine tourism. A highly integrated maritime economy that encompasses manufacturing, services, and research reinforces the state’s competitive advantages as the Ocean State

Advanced Business Services: Modern corporations rely on back-office and headquarter operations such as web services, data processing, marketing, client management, human resources, financial services, and strategy and product development support. Applying advanced technologies to these activities can help firms improve their competitiveness in the marketplace. Rhode Island can drive growth in this area by leveraging existing strengths and its strategic geographic location.

- **Arts, Education, Hospitality, and Tourism:** This growth area brings together creative and recreational services across the arts, higher education, hospitality, full-service restaurants, conventions, gambling, and tours and sightseeing. Opportunities include expanding on an already vibrant tourism industry and expected employment gains in higher education
- **Design, Food, and Custom Manufacturing:** Industrial design provides significant competitive advantages for companies. Driven by rapid technological developments, falling costs, and 3D printing technology, industrial design is an increasingly important part of product and service development. Meanwhile, a burgeoning maker movement is lowering the barriers to designing and manufacturing goods. Particular opportunities for Rhode Island include rising demand for industrial design and growing interest in food manufacturing that stands at the nexus of food and health
- **Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics:** This growth area encompasses the state’s multi-modal freight transportation system, which includes ocean shipping, rail shipping, and trucking. These activities inform decisions about warehouse siting and distribution networks as well as demand for logistics services. Rhode Island has particular opportunities in grocery wholesaling and warehousing and storage
- **The Blue Economy:** The emerging Blue Economy should be a unifying initiative that can build on the distinctive and formidable assets of the National Undersea Warfare Center, Offshore Wind, URI, tourism, and enterprising groups like Sea Ahead. Rhode Island should “skate to where the puck is headed” and maximize its position as the nation’s premier “Ocean State” by investing in ocean technology.
- **Offshore Wind:** Rhode Island should maximize its potential in Offshore Wind through strategic investments in the maintenance and operations of this new industry’s increasingly robust supply chain.
- **‘Back Office’ Operations:** Given its strategic location, cost structure and talent pool, Rhode Island should take advantage of its potential to be an attractive, affordable Back Office market for major companies in New England and beyond.

1.2 An analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment requirements for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)]

The career pathway and training focus for the greater Rhode Island region will continue to look at middle skilled occupations in the sectors described earlier. Some of these occupations include: Healthcare - CNA, Medical Lab Technologist, Pharmacy tech; Manufacturing - CNC machinist, production technician, assembly technician; IT - entry level help desk. The Greater RI region will work to develop work based learning opportunities along a continuum including: work experience, transitional jobs, internships, apprenticeships and OJT, that result in industry recognized credentials. We will also focus on short term career and technical classroom training.

For the occupations identified in both the LMI and Rhode Island Innovates analyses, a majority require high levels of one or more STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields. This suggests that a number of STEM competencies are highly valuable to employers and are associated with jobs with above average growth rates and typically pay a living wage.

In addition to STEM skills, multiple skills gap analysis, employer interviews, industry listening sessions and other inquiries identified certain skills that many Rhode Island employers identified as critical to employment, regardless of occupation. Whether referred to as 'work readiness skills,' 'soft skills,' or 'essential skills'; these non-technical skills are an important factor in hiring and promotion decisions and will inform the collective strategy of the state workforce network:

- Critical thinking
- Reading comprehension
- Active listening
- Speaking
- Complex problem solving
- Judgment and decision making
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Writing

In recent years, additional skills preferences have been observed across industries that are not unique to any one occupation including:

- Social Media
- Data Analytics
- Multilingual proficiency
- Cultural competency

Many of these skills are related to skills expected of high demand fields in the state, yet the list is not limited to technical skills - interpersonal skills, language skills and cultural competency are also taking on increasing value in a more diverse and global 21st century economy.

1.3 An analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)]

The greater Rhode Island area is comprised of 37 cities and towns with a total combined estimated population of 796,706 (2018). Population growth in the region has been relatively flat since in recent years, with minor increases as compared to population totals in 2010 (794,138) and 2000 (795,432). Approximately 75.4% of all Rhode Islanders lived in the Greater Rhode Island area in 2018. According to the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS), the demographic composition of the area was:

- Whites 85.5%
- Black or African American 4.5%
- Asian 2.3%
- Two or More Races 2.7%
- Some Other Race 4.6%
- Roughly 10% of Greater Rhode Island residents are of Hispanic or Latino origin
- 10.2% of Greater Rhode Island residents have a disability

The ACS indicates that 27% percent of Greater Rhode Island household population (aged 25 and older) have a high school diploma or equivalent, 18.4% have at least some college-level courses, and 44.3% have an associate degree or higher. 10.3% of working age Greater Rhode Island residents lack a high school diploma, a rate that is lower than the statewide total of 10.9%.

As of September 2020, the unemployment rate in the region was 9.4% with a labor force of 429,446 individuals, total employment of 389,131 and total unemployment of 40,315. Within the region, unemployment rates varied from a high of 14.1% in Central Falls and 13.7% in Woonsocket to a low of 5.5% in Jamestown and 5.3% in New Shoreham (Block Island).

1.4 An analysis and description of adult and dislocated worker workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the needs identified in 1.2. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D) & 108 (b)(7)]

The design and delivery of Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are based around the goals and needs of the customer, the demands of local industry and employers, and the available resources within the workforce development network (i.e. community based organizations, training providers and post-secondary schools). Customers' skills, knowledge and abilities are assessed, and workforce activities are developed and delivered to support effective matches between job seekers and local employers. All staff have access to labor market insights and information that enhances our efforts in helping job seekers find good jobs and employers find talent.

Greater Rhode Island has committed a good deal of time and resources to better integrating real-time intelligence and perspective from employer partners to guide and inform the design and delivery of Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. This growing connection between the needs of regional employers and industries and the development and delivery of Adult and Dislocated Worker programming is an important strength. Adult and Dislocated Worker customers move through a continuum of career services, including both an initial and a comprehensive assessment (and, as needed career development workshops and/or learning and development services). Based on the individual goals and needs, job seekers are matched with either a work-based learning placement or an occupational skills training opportunity related to an in-demand industry sector. For those job seekers only needing Career Coaching and counseling, one-on-one career coaching is provided and job search strategy is created and supported toward the final goal of obtaining permanent employment.

Adult and Dislocated worker staff recently completed a series of technical assistance and training programs designed to improve their knowledge and familiarity of other programs within the workforce development network (such as adult education and family literacy programs) as well as instructions in trauma-informed case management. This focus on continuous improvement and professional development makes the frontline staff for Adult and Dislocated Worker programming another key strength.

A specific strength of the local area's business service programming is the degree to which it is coordinated with the state's economic development efforts. GRI business service staff is colocated with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and is able to provide information regarding business services and programming as part of the state's business expansion and retainment strategy. Business services have been streamlined, strengthened and clarified for our customers. The area utilizes a specific menu of services, conducts targeted outreach to specified industry sectors, strengthen partnerships across industry sectors and collaborates to connect job seekers to identified opportunities. The business service team is focused on job fairs and hiring events, recruiting job candidates, and developing a responsive and flexible talent-pool system.

While Adult and Dislocated Worker programming continues to deliver high-quality and employer-informed services to customers; no system is perfect; and there are a number of weaknesses that the area will focus on in the coming years. The continuing relative lack of 'name recognition' among job seekers and employers limits the reach, scope and impact of our programs. In addition, Adult and Dislocated Worker programming continues to be somewhat isolated from the rest of the workforce network, particularly state-funded community and industry partnership efforts such as Real Jobs RI and Real Pathways RI, both of which focus on a similar population as the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Lastly, while there has been a concerted effort to better integrate access to critical supports and other services, including but not limited to: access to information regarding human service programs and health insurance, financial literacy programming, and digital literacy programming, these important components are still relatively lacking within the Adult and Dislocated Worker system. Adult and dislocated worker services are provided in each of the NetWorkRI offices in the area: the comprehensive center in West Warwick and the satellite centers in Woonsocket and Wakefield.

1.5 An analysis and description of youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices, for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9)]

WIOA Youth Programming is provided through a series of strategic partnerships throughout the state. Collaboration among industry, community providers, and other essential partners are strongly encouraged to ensure the opportunity for workforce strategies, education, training, and trauma-informed case management services for participating youth. Additionally, the inclusion of youth voice and leadership as a guiding factor in the program design is strongly encouraged and emphasized.

A key strength of the WIOA Youth Program is its ability to offer a wide range of education, workforce, and support services, all customized to the needs of the youth client. By design, and in compliance with federal WIOA requirements; Youth partnerships offer a comprehensive menu of services focused on the basic/human needs, educational needs, and career development needs of youth. In recent years, the WIOA system has elevated the importance of youth client's social/emotional needs as well.

A second strength of the WIOA Youth system is its focus on high quality work-based learning experiences. Work-based learning is a best practice in workforce development as a means to introduce youth to the responsibilities and expectations in the workplace, while building their personal and professional network. The Governor's Workforce Board previously issued guidance and standards for high-quality work based learning, and WIOA Youth service providers are expected to implement and follow these standards when offering work-based learning experiences for youth clients. In response to employers reporting a need for soft skills and work readiness, all youth service providers include work/career readiness instruction and development as part of their programming.

The ability to connect with high-growth and high-wage industries continues to be a challenge for WIOA Youth programs, as is the ability to connect the work of youth service providers with the larger workforce and education network. Per the RFP for WIOA Youth, employers and industry partners must be included in the development and design of programs, and many partnerships have made great strides in bringing new industry partners to the table. However the youth service network overall remains challenged in helping connect youth with a more diverse range of occupations and opportunities. Youth services are provided on a contract basis with partnerships through the state.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Please answer the questions in Section 2 in ten (10) pages or less. Section 2 responses should be greatly influenced by the members of the local workforce development board and other community stakeholders.

2.1 Provide the board's vision and goals for its local workforce system in preparing an educated and skilled workforce in the local area, including goals for youth and individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

Vision: The Greater RI Workforce Development Area will deliver workforce development services through an integrated, job-driven system that links diverse talent to employers. These workforce development services will support the development of a strong, vibrant local economy where businesses thrive, and people want to live and work.

Goal 1 : The Greater RI Workforce Development Area will strategically align its workforce development programs to ensure that employment and training services provided by the core programs (WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education) are coordinated and complementary so that job seekers acquire skills and credentials that meet employers' needs.

Goal 2: The Greater RI Workforce Development Area will continue to foster collaboration and alignment between this region's workforce development programs, economic development priorities, and elementary and secondary school systems.

Goal 3: The Greater RI Workforce Development Area, working with other core program organizations, will increase the quality and accessibility of services that job seekers and employers receive at local NetworkRI career centers through leveraging technology and other innovative service models.

Goal 4: The Greater RI Workforce Development Area will increase the use of proven service delivery models and best practices in serving disconnected youth and other vulnerable populations.

Goal 5: The Greater RI Workforce Development Area will improve services to individuals with disabilities to increase their access to high quality workforce services and prepare them for competitive integrated employment.

Goal 6: The Greater RI Workforce Development Area place special emphasis on the development, implementation and/or expansion of strategies for meeting the needs of industries and job seekers (particularly job seekers with barriers to employment) through industry-based and community-based partnerships, and leveraging proven training and employment strategies such as registered apprenticeship.

Goal 7: The Greater RI Workforce Development Area will promote accountability and transparency by ensuring that its employment and training programs are evidence based and data driven, and accountable to the State Workforce Development Board, the Local Governance Subcommittee of the State Board, local employers, job seekers, and the general public.

2.2 Describe how the board’s vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision of the Governor’s Workforce Board of Rhode Island (RI’s State Workforce Development Board). See Local Plan References and Resources.

Vision

In her 2019 Inaugural Address, Governor Raimondo declared: “We won’t stop until every Rhode Islander has a shot at a good paying job. Our world is changing so quickly. This change requires all of us to be lifelong learners. No matter who you are, where you come from or what point you're at in your career, you deserve access to job training, an apprenticeship, and education that will help you get ahead in whatever field you choose.”

The Governor’s challenge envisions a Rhode Island where individuals from all income and skill levels, no matter their present circumstance, can rise up the career ladder and improve the economic circumstances for themselves and their families. In the process, Rhode Island employers receive a distinct competitive advantage in the form of a vibrant and talented labor market from which they can draw.

The Local Plan has been developed in alignment with the State Plan and its vision and goals. This includes specific focus on sector strategies, career pathways, and innovative service models to help all job seekers in the greater Rhode Island area contribute to the economy and reach their career goals.

The Greater Rhode Island workforce development area will continue its evolution toward a demand-driven and sector-based system, leveraging industry partnerships and collaborative employer relationships wherever possible. As described in Section 1, the Greater Rhode Island area identified industry sectors that account for a significant portion of the region’s economy in labor, wages, and investment. These industries include: Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Accommodation & Food Services, Manufacturing, Administrative Support & Waste Management, Finance & Insurance, Professional & Technical Services, and Construction. These sectors were further refined by analysis conducted by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, which identified specific subsectors and concentrations that play to the state’s strengths and offer additional areas of opportunity for the Rhode Island economy. These include: Biomedical Innovation, IT / Software, Cyber-Physical Systems, and Data Analytics, Defense Shipbuilding and Maritime, Advanced Business Services, Arts, Education, Hospitality, and Tourism, Design, Food, and Custom Manufacturing, Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics, The Blue Economy, Offshore Wind, and ‘Back Office’ Operations. In each of these sector and subsectors, the Greater Rhode Island Workforce area is focused on developing industry-specific strategies and career pathways. Our sector strategy is particularly focused on more effective partnership with industry-sector partnerships such as those funded through the Real Jobs RI programs.

The Greater Rhode Island area is also particularly focused on better serving job seekers with barriers to employment – better connecting them with employment opportunities and providing them with the supports and guidance necessary to persist and succeed in programming. This will include adoption of new and innovative training and service models, including contract and customized training for job seekers and low-wage incumbent workers, as well as more effective use of technology in serving clients. The GRI area will also focus on increased adoption of OJT and registered apprenticeship training programs wherein individuals gain relevant knowledge, skills and abilities through participation in the labor market and while earning a wage. GRI also recognizes that our participants, particularly those with the highest barriers to employment, requires additional supportive services. The WIOA partners in the GRI area will more strategically collaborate around the provision of supportive services including transportation, food, textbooks, licensing/certification fees, clothing, and tools and equipment, where needed. Lastly, our career pathways strategy will be particularly focused on more effective partnership with community-based partnerships such as those funded through the Real Pathways RI programs.

2.3 Describe how the board's goals, strategies, programs, and projects align with and will contribute to achieving the GWB's key goals below:

GOAL 1: Implement a demand-driven, sector-based strategy to meet employer demand and establish a pipeline of skilled workers for future demand

GOAL 2: Advance a career pathway strategy to provide employment, education, training and support services for individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment (including TANF recipients), that will ensure an opportunity to develop their education and skills to prepare them for a job at various points in their life.

GOAL 3: Align policy and leverage existing government structures and resources so that government is "networked" and coordinated to achieve efficiencies and effectiveness throughout the workforce system.

GOAL 4: Use data to inform policy-making decisions, guide investments and evaluate performance to measure return on investments

The local plan is well aligned with the four key goals identified in the State Plan. GRI will work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to support service alignment and implement the policy strategies emphasized in the State Plan:

Sector strategies are at the heart of this local plan and are expressly represented in the local plan's goals. By leveraging the state's decades-long investments in sector-based workforce development, GRI will focus on forming partnerships in sectors that drive the local economy. These partnerships will help inform policy and program design, and, when appropriate, partner with the GRI area on the direct provision of training and career services to clients.

Career pathways are also 'front and center' in the elements of this plan as GRI has prioritized creating opportunity for all residents through: training opportunities that are more responsive to employers and industry (On-the-Job Training [OJT], Customized Training [CT], Contract-Based Training [BT], and Apprenticeship) that support the development of both essential and technical skills coupled with other skill-building resources; more effective adoption of best practices, integrated service models, and technology; and the provision of quick and effective wraparound supports and assistance to help participants persist and complete programming.

Building regional partnerships and leveraging integrated serviced delivery models across front-line staff, education and training providers, and economic development leaders are key mechanisms to drive our workforce system forward. GRI's MOU will outline how WIOA partners in the area will work together to provide seamless and integrated employment, educational and human services for all residents in the GRI region. At the same time, the Local Governance Board and others will lead efforts to build the community network to reach more diverse populations and raise the profile and presence of the NetWorkRI centers.

As described in the plan goals, the Greater RI Workforce Development Area will promote accountability and transparency by ensuring that its employment and training programs are evidence based and data driven, and accountable to the State Workforce Development Board, the Local Governance Subcommittee of the State Board, local employers, job seekers, and the general public. Performance data, particularly around service levels and representation of the socio-economic, racial and ethnic, and geographic diversity of the area will be a key focus area for the Board.

2.4 Describe board actions to become and/or remain a high-performing board. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(18)]

For the purposes of this element, the GWB considers a high-performing local board as a board that:

- ensures the yearly attainment of goals, strategies, and operational elements as articulated in applicable law, regulation, contract(s) and agreement(s);
- ensures the expectations outlined in the State WIOA Plan, program grant and associated requirements, and federal guidance are achieved;
- meets its varied responsibilities including fiduciary and administrative in a professional manner;
- upholds its mission of being accountable to the workforce area stakeholders; and
- abides by other policies and expectations as determined by the Governor's Workforce Board

The Governor's Workforce Board is a strong, business-led, collaborative that continues to support economic growth and a comprehensive workforce development system. Its Local Area Advisory Subcommittee is a comparatively new addition, added in response to the waiver authority granted by the US Secretary of Labor for the State Workforce Development Board to act as the Local Workforce Development Board for the Greater Rhode Island region. The Local Governance Subcommittee is a key vehicle through which the Board can work with local partners and solicit feedback and input from the local area. The Board works strategically with state and local economic development agencies to create a pipeline of qualified workers who meet the workforce needs of local employers.

The Board will ensure attainment of goals, strategies and performance goals by:

- Keeping the Local Area Advisory Subcommittee of the Board frequently up-to-date on performance, service levels, and programmatic milestones in the area
- Developing a more robust partnership with our workforce center operator and clearly delineating goals and expectations for One Stop operations

The Board will ensure the expectations outlined in the State WIOA Plan, program grant and associated requirements, and federal guidance are achieved by:

- Conducting a comprehensive review of all local area policies, procedures, and program requirements to ensure the priorities of the state plan and the requirements of federal partners,
- Provide staff-led orientations and information sessions to new and veteran Board members to build the knowledge base and familiar with the partners, programs, and policies of the GRI workforce development area.

The Board will meet its varied responsibilities including fiduciary and administrative in a professional manner through open communication, and periodic formal updates with staff from the Department of Labor and Training, the fiduciary and administrative agent for the Board.

The Board will uphold its mission of being accountable to the workforce area stakeholders through the transparent publication of performance data, program information, financial information, and other relevant items, as well as keeping the Local Governance Subcommittee of the Board frequently up-to-date on performance, service levels, and programmatic milestones.

2.5 Describe how the board's goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures. See Local Plan References and Resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

The Board believe that the goals and strategies identified in this plan will assist our local area in achieving the negotiated federal performance measures. The Board feels that to reach federal performance goals for employment and earnings, you need to make sure that training and career service programming is informed by and in alignment with industry and employer needs. Therefore, the board’s goals that focus on leveraging industry sector partnerships and better aligning the workforce system with the economic development priorities of the region will assist in the achievement of federal performance measures. The Board also feels that better integrating service delivery and more strategic inclusion of support and wraparound services will lead to better retention and attainment of skills and credentials. To promote employment and economic stability in the Greater Rhode Island area, there needs to be an inclusive, collective approach, with common goals, transparent data and flexible programming. These priorities are reflected throughout this plan.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Please answer the questions in Section 3 in eight (8) pages or less. Many of the responses below, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners.

3.1 Taking into account the analysis in Section 1, describe the local board's strategy to work with the organizations that carry out core programs to align resources in the local area, in support of the vision and goals described in Question 2.1. See Local Plan References and Resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]

The Greater RI Board works with a variety of entities to implement WIOA in the area and will continue to endeavor to align and integrate services to customers through a demand-driven but client-centered approach. Core program partners include the following:

- Department of Labor & Training
- Department of Education
- Department of Human Services- Office of Rehabilitation Services

The local Board will use the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process in order to specify additional expectations and conditions as it relates to the provision of WIOA partner services, both within and outside of the American Job Centers (NetWorkRI offices) in the area. WIOA partner staff will receive regular service and program updates and work together to coordinate resources and services for customers.

For higher level alignment and program integration, the GRI area can leverage the composition of the Governor's Workforce Board, which, by statute, includes the policy leads and key decision makers for all Core Programs, as well as partner programs including TANF and Perkins CTE. Issues and conflicts between core programs in the local area can be raised and mitigated at the board level. This frontline-to-principal community pipeline is a rare opportunity not present to most local workforce development boards.

For front-line alignment and program integration, a key focus will be on ensuring universal knowledge and acquaintance of all programs across the workforce development spectrum. Much work has been done among all the core partners since the publication of the previous GRI local plan. Several joint staff meetings, technical assistance sessions, and program information convenings have led to increased program staff knowledge and familiarity between and among the WIOA core partner programs. Staff have further been provided a desk guide, complete with contact information and program descriptions to, to assist all NetWorkRI-located staff in making appropriate referrals and assist in connecting individuals to services they need to be successful. A key focus of the plan implementation period will be on the provision of joint customer service training, cultural and diversity training, and continued knowledge sharing from WIOA partners and community based organizations to ensure all core program staff have the tools necessary to deliver effective services and/or make appropriate referrals to job seekers and employers.

3.2 Identify the programs/partners that are included in the local workforce development system. Include, at a minimum, organizations that provide services for Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(2)]

NAME OF PARTNER	PARTNER PROGRAMS
Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIOA Adult Programs under WIOA Title I • WIOA Dislocated Worker Programs under WIOA Title I • WIOA Youth Programs under WIOA Title I • Programs Authorized under of the Second Chance Act of 2007 • Employment Services under the Wagner-Peyser Act • Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs under WIOA Title I • Programs under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 • Programs Authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38, U.S.C. Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Programs • Activities Authorized under Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 • Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) (additional partner) • Programs under State Unemployment Compensation Laws
Rhode Island Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education and Literacy Programs under Title II of WIOA • Postsecondary Vocational Education Activities under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act
Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs Authorized under Parts A and B of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 WIOA Title IV
Exeter Job Corps Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Corps Programs Authorized under WIOA Title I
Rhode Island Indian Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native American Programs Authorized under WIOA Title I
Cumberland Housing Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and Training Activities Carried Out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
Rhode Island Department of Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TANF Programs Authorized under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act
Tri-County Community Action Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Service Block Grant Programs

3.3 Describe efforts to work with partners identified in 3.2 to support alignment of service provision to contribute to the achievement of goals and strategies. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(2)]

The Greater RI Board is committed to the alignment of services at the NetworkRI and promoting the “seamless delivery” services. As part of the MOU negotiation, are asked to provide meaningful assistance and contribution to the development of a statewide electronic client referral system. If such a system is adopted, all partners have agreed to participate in its operation; if such a system is not adopted, then partners agree to collaborate on a uniform referral process.

Greater Rhode Island already operates an integrated service delivery with Wagner-Peyser, Veteran, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Adjustment Assistance and WIOA programs to support alignment of services and avoid duplication. In the coming years our focus will be on better aligning the services of other WIOA partner programs to build a system that is employer and industry-driven, and centered around the client with function and process flow designed by customer service needs, not program funding. To that end, the Board will work closely with our One-Stop Operator on a regional and national ‘best practices scan’ on effective redesigns of One-Stop centers to make the locations more customer-focused and friendly. In collaboration with the Operator, the Board will then work with our WIOA partner programs in adopting and implementing those best practices to support alignment of service provision.

3.4 Describe strategies to maximize coordination of services in order to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12)]

Greater Rhode Island will maximize coordination of job seeker-services and avoids duplication of services through a variety of strategies. One area where coordination may be most beneficial is in employer engagement and hiring initiatives. While all WIOA partners are eager to connect with and form professional/recruitment relationships with employers; it is to the benefit of all partners that the system avoids overloading employers. For this reason, the Board, in collaboration with the One Stop Operator, will focus on coordinating employer-focused initiatives and hiring events across and among all One Stop partner; connecting pre-screened job ready candidates from across all programs to job openings at engaged businesses. The area will also look to improve communication and participation among Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other partner programs in Rapid Response activities including participation at workshops for affected employees.

3.5 Identify how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan and state provided criteria. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)]

WIOA requires LWDBs to coordinate with eligible Adult Education and Literacy providers and review applications to determine whether they are aligned with the local plan and, if necessary, make recommendations to the state agency administering adult education alignment. The Workforce Board will make staff and select Board Members available to work with the Rhode Island Department of Education in the review the applications to provide adult education and literacy activities under WIOA in the local area and determine whether such applications are consistent with the local plan. If determined necessary, the staff and Board Members will make recommendations to the Department to promote alignment with the plan.

3.6 Describe efforts to support and/or promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, in coordination with economic development and other partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(5)]

Per state statute; the Secretary of the Rhode Island Executive Office of Commerce serves as the Vice-Chair of the State Workforce Development Board, itself the board for the Greater Rhode Island area. This strategic alignment extends down to frontline staff level as well and allows for better collaboration between the area's workforce development system and the work of the state's economic development agency. One major priority for the Office of Commerce over the past several years has been building an inventory and network of assets and organizations available to start-up company and entrepreneurs to help promote the development of small and micro businesses and other opportunities for self-employment. In the coming years the local area, in partnership with Commerce, will develop referral and cross-programming relationships with these entities to help connect interested job seekers with the resources that are available to them. The local area will also seek to better integrate and connect with the range of entrepreneurial and microenterprise programming that is funded and offered through the Real Jobs RI program as well as by other partners including, but not limited to: the Center for Women and Enterprise, the federal Small Business Administration, and other high quality partners.

3.7 Describe how the local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10)]

The Greater Rhode Island area benefits from having six colleges and universities (including multiple campuses of the state's community college); the multiparty Westerly Education Center, and the Woonsocket Education Center strategically located throughout its geographic reach; as a result, individuals have access to a variety of in-demand training programs. As part of sector-driven efforts, the board helps facilitate connections between industry partners and these postsecondary institutions (as well as institutions in the Providence-Cranston workforce development area) to review training offerings and curriculum and ensure that they match with employer and industry demands as well as with the requirements of secondary and postsecondary educational standards. While WIOA's core function remains focused on connecting qualified individuals to employment, the state of Rhode Island has placed special emphasis and priority of increasing postsecondary attainment and credentialing. The local board plays an important role in this statewide effort as a potential source of financial support to lower-income individuals interested in pursuing postsecondary education. The GRI area directly provides for individual training accounts (ITA), group training contracts, and other assistance that could be used as tuition support for students in credential programs. At the same time, the Board can help connect colleges and universities with additional resources and community supports for their working/adult students who need wraparound support services and guidance to help persist and complete.

3.8 Describe efforts to coordinate supportive services provided through workforce investment activities in the local area, including facilitating transportation for customers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(11)]

Greater RI will make available transportation assistance, childcare assistance, and other necessary support services to adults, dislocated workers, and youth participants that qualify. The Greater RI Board and its Service Providers will coordinate supportive services with all federal, state, and local agencies including Pell, UI, and any other funding resources available to the participant.

The Greater Rhode Island Supportive Service Policy (WIN 15-06) allows for the provision of supportive services at the discretion of the program staff and limits total assistance to no greater than \$1000, with limit-item specific limits as well (for example, caps/limits on mileage reimbursements). As part of a larger comprehensive policy review, the State Workforce Development Board plans to review the Support Service policy for the Greater RI area to maximize flexibility and ease/increase access to supports wherever possible. In recent years,

the State Board has compiled a desk guide/asset inventory to identify the partners and providers throughout the state who provide services related to, or supportive of, workforce development activities. This inventory is not exhaustive, and does not include all available supportive services, but can be used as a starting point to identify partners who may be able to provide WIOA customers with additional resources and support. This inventory will be continuously updated as additional resources are identified to ensure that front line staff have a good understanding of the resources that are available, and customers have access to the most comprehensive list of opportunities as is possible.

The Greater RI Board also intends to provide meaningful assistance and contribution to the development of a statewide electronic client referral system. This proposed system, which is a multiparty effort across numerous public and nonprofit entities, looks to create a comprehensive closed- and open-looped referral platform that encompasses the full spectrum of human service, health, education, and career resources available in the state. This system, once online, would dramatically extend the reach and knowledge base of One Stop staff and allow them to connect clients to a broader range of community services and supports, while enabling communication and feedback loops with the referred entity.

3.9 Based on the analysis described in Section 1.1-1.3, identify the populations that the local area plans to focus its efforts and resources on, also known as targeted populations.

The Greater Rhode Island area is focused on building the capacity of the workforce system to successfully serve the most vulnerable in our region. We believe the public workforce system must be responsive to the needs of all job seekers, but especially low-income and other underserved residents including those receiving public assistance, those with low basic skills and communities of color. The Board is committed to ensuring that underserved populations have access to resources and training that will allow them to succeed in the job market and will focus on growing partnerships within the community, including but not limited to the partnerships within the state Real Pathways RI program, to most effectively serve the following target populations:

- Low-income persons
- Basic skills deficient
- Ex-Offenders
- Individuals with disabilities
- English language learners
- Homeless persons
- Public housing residents
- Veterans
- Public assistance recipients (SNAP, TANF)
- Youth disconnected from school or work

3.10 Based on the analysis described Section 1, identify all industries, if any, where the local area plans to engage a targeted sector strategy. This section should align with the industries and businesses identified in the state plan, as well as the industry clusters outlined in the state's economic development strategy - "Rhode Island Innovates" reports I and II.

The Greater Rhode Island area identified industry sectors that account for a significant portion of the region's economy in labor, wages, and investment. These industries include: Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Accommodation & Food Services, Manufacturing, Administrative Support & Waste Management, Finance & Insurance, Professional & Technical Services, and Construction. These industries align with the state's priority economic sectors as identified in "Rhode Island Innovates" I and II including: Biomedical Innovation, IT / Software, Cyber-Physical Systems, and Data Analytics, Defense Shipbuilding and Maritime, Advanced Business Services, Arts, Education, Hospitality, and Tourism, Design, Food, and Custom Manufacturing, Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics, The Blue Economy, Offshore Wind, and 'Back Office' Operations.

In each of these sector and subsectors, the Greater Rhode Island Workforce area is focused on engaging a targeted sector strategy through more tangible collaboration with industry-sector partnerships such as those funded through the Real Jobs RI programs. For example, in instances where the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Board observes that the available training providers included on the ETPL lack the capacity or are otherwise insufficient to meet the needs of the industries above, the board may elect to enter into a contract-based training relationship with a Real Jobs RI partner to provide such industry-driven training. Furthermore, the Greater RI region will look to encourage and promote better communication and connection between industry-sector partnerships and the region's Youth service providers to help build more diverse and strategic career pathways for in-school and out-of-school youth clients.

3.11 Based on the analysis described Section 1, describe the local investment strategy toward targeted sectors identified in 3.10 and targeted populations identified in 3.9.

As partnerships with industry-driven (Real Jobs RI) and community-driven (Real Pathways RI) partnerships are formalized and as strategies and training solutions are collaboratively developed, the Board will work to connect resources and investments in career exploration activities, work-based learning, individual training accounts and cohort/contract-based training with the activities of the partnerships, while still honoring the principles of customer-choice and program integrity.

A specific focus of the local area in the coming plan period will be on creating deeper and more actionable connections between secondary schools in the region and the workforce development network to better serve recent high school graduates that are not on the path to career, college, or military service. High Schools are directly aware of students that fall within this category and who may be most in need of the training and career services the workforce development system can provide. Community and academic leaders will be key partners in developing these partnerships.

3.12 Identify and describe the strategies and services that are and/or will be used to:

- A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in workforce development programs (in addition to targeted sector strategies identified in 3.10 and 3.11)
- B. Support a local workforce development system described in 3.2 that meets the needs of businesses
- C. Better coordinate workforce development programs with economic development partners and programs
- D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs

This may include the implementation of incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, registered apprenticeship models, customized training programs, or utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in 3.1. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4)(A&B)]

- A. The Board will initially focus efforts primarily on building sector partnerships within the targeted sectors as a framework for how we engage deeply with employers to better understand and address their needs. Through our partnership with the state Office of Commerce, we will focus on engaging small employers through knowledge sharing and partnerships with regional Chambers of Commerce, the SBA, and other intermediaries.
- B. While employer engagement and relationship-building channeled through our sector partnerships, the Board will create a feedback mechanism within the local system to gather and disseminate feedback from employers to relevant partners.
- C. As mentioned, the collaboration between Board staff and staff with the Commerce Department is intensive. The Board will continue to work closely with these partners to refine and clarify coordination efforts to align our collective work.
- D. Unemployment services in Rhode Island are largely provided virtually with applications and recertification handled via the online system or through the call center. With regards to Rapid Response, WIOA adult and dislocated worker staff work with the Rapid Response team to assist with registration and enrollment of new claimants. The Unemployment Insurance program identifies claimants that are likely to exhaust benefits and refers them for Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA). This is intended to have claimants that are most likely to exhaust benefits meet with staff to determine service needs most likely to re-engage them in employment.

3.13 Does the local board currently leverage or have oversight of funding outside of WIOA Title I funding and state general funds to support the local workforce development system? Briefly describe the funding and how it will impact the local system. If the local board does not currently have oversight of additional funding, does it have future plans to pursue them?

At this time the Greater Rhode Island area does not leverage any funds aside from WIOA formula funds and state Job Development Funds.

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

Please answer the following questions in Section 4 in eight (8) pages or less. Many of the responses below, such as career pathways and individual training accounts, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners.

4.1 Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

A continuing priority of the Great RI Board has been to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. To that end, the Board will consider great adoption of virtual and mobile opportunities which would bring available WIOA services to locations other than the One-Stop / American Job Center. Providing WIOA services 'on the road' and in an environment and location that is closer and more comfortable to the individual, will help ease and expand access to these services. As lessons are learned and best practices are documented, the Board will then work with applicable workforce service providers to redesign and re-engineer traditional programs to better meet the needs of eligible individuals with barriers to employment.

4.2 Describe how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable). See Local Plan References and Resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

The Greater Rhode Island Board will promote career pathways and career lattices, especially those with a strong work-based learning component, that include high quality counseling and wrap-around supports to address and overcome the barriers to completion and employment that so many jobseekers face. Such a fluid, customer-focused pathways will be developed through our Sector Strategy efforts as well as ongoing employer engagement.

The Board and our sector partners will also work closely with Economic Development entities, Business and Community Colleges to identify gaps in training opportunities to and work with partners to increase availability of training, particularly for individuals with barriers to employment. Whenever possible, new and renewed training models will prioritize the inclusion and awarding of industry-recognized credentials and post-secondary credit that can help advance client's career and educational goals.

"Earn and learn" opportunities are critically important to the residents of the greater Rhode Island region. Few individuals and families can afford to spend extended periods of time in unpaid training programs. The Board is working to ensure that there are a variety of training options available that meet employers' needs and provide the opportunity for hands-on, earn while you learn training.

Consistent with the State Plan, the Board will also work to promote registered apprenticeship programs as an opportunity to "earn and learn" in the region. Historically, the One Stop system collaboration with approved registered apprenticeship programs has been minimal. Greater Rhode Island will prioritize better leveraging of apprenticeship programs as part of our career pathways strategy.

Upon passage of State and Local authorizing policy, consistent with WIOA law, describing the funding opportunities that local areas may apply to support registered apprenticeship programs, the Greater Rhode Island workforce system will assist the apprenticeship program in recruiting individuals who are appropriate and qualified for the apprenticeship training, and will enroll them. WIOA funds will be utilized to assist with the cost of the classroom training portion of the apprenticeship training (usually for the first year), and then the One Stop staff and the apprenticeship program will work together to place the individual in a job with a qualified employer. If supportive services are necessary, they may be covered by the WIOA program.

Upon placement with a qualified employer, the individual will be exited from the WIOA program. Recognizing the need to continue to build working relationships with registered apprenticeship, the Greater RI Board will continue to promote information exchange and discussion about the requirements and availability of registered apprenticeship programs and assist with workforce development initiatives for the region.

4.3 Describe how the local board will utilize co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs to maximize efficiencies and use of resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

Appropriate co-enrollment serves the customer in the most efficient and effective manner possible; customers are co-enrolled in all funding streams for which they are both eligible and receive services in order maximize use of resources. WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker customers are co-enrolled with in Wagner-Peyser services, RESEA, Trade, JVSG, TANF, and other state operated workforce programs when appropriate. Youth over the age of 18 may be co-enrolled as adults if there is benefit for additional services. This is particularly important for out of school youth and core partner, Adult Education. TANF participation indicates a significant barrier to employment and may be a qualifier for enrollment in a WIOA Adult or older Youth Program. Vocational Rehabilitation and WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs may utilize co-enrollment to enhance employability.

4.4 Describe one-stop delivery system in the local area, consistent with the One-Stop Center Definitions. See Local Plan References and Resources.

- A. Describe the local board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted services providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]

As part of the Board's Strategic Planning effort, we intend to conduct an analysis of the use of ITAs for both the adult and dislocated worker programs to determine the degree to which they reflect the state's priority industry sectors and occupations. The Board will also partner with the One-Stop Operator on identifying best practices, and areas for change within the area One-Stop Centers so that the one-stop delivery system continues to improve and evolve with the changing of needs of the region. This will include the development of multiple, diverse feedback loops including, but not limited to customer satisfaction surveys, in person focus groups, and employer panels to measure the extent to which the system is meeting employer and job seeker needs, and any recommendations for improvement.

B. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas, through the use of technology, and through other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B)]

Many of the services, particularly the core services, provided in the one-stop system such as unemployment benefits filing, job matching, resume building, skill assessments, and skill building are currently available through technology and accessible anywhere with internet access. The NetWorkRI website provides information, access, and links to these services and access to events such as job fairs, recruitment events, workshops, occupations in-demand information, local grants, internship opportunities, and partner services. The Board uses social media and has a digital distribution network which includes partners across the region to increase awareness of and access to services provided in the one-stop system. A focus of the Board in the coming performance period will be increasing presence and awareness of services through local libraries and community-based organizations.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the greater RI one-stop was forced to evolve and adapt direct client services to a socially distant virtual environment. Many if not most of these adaptations will likely become permanent features of the system once the pandemic subsides. The Board will consider implementing online/virtual workshops, referrals, and e-training and may also consider virtual assistance and counseling for customers using Skype/Zoom and other technologies as a balanced approach to service delivery, while keeping in mind the technology literacy level of the customers we serve.

C. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C)]

The Greater RI One Stop centers are all accessible for individuals with disabilities and meet or exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities.

- Facilities are checked for ADA compliance as part of periodic Local Equal Opportunity monitoring using the ADA Self-Assessment Tool.
- Customers are provided reasonable accommodations upon request at the AJC.
- Assistive technology is available at all AJCs in the region.
- Sign language interpretation service is available for persons with hearing loss upon request.
- Staff are trained as part of new hire orientation on serving customers with accommodations and assistive technology.

All programs are required to meet ADA requirements for accessibility to facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. Any findings need to be corrected and/ or addressed with a corrective action plan. Workforce Development Board staff follows up to ensure findings are resolved and closed within the required timeframe.

D. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners by providing a summary of the

area's memorandum of understanding (and resource sharing agreements, if such documents are used). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(D)]

Since 2018, the Greater Rhode Island Board has had a Memorandum of Understanding with the various agencies that make up the One Stop system. The Memorandum is up for review and renewal as of September 2020.

The Attachments accompanying the MOU identify and detail the career services of the one-stop delivery system in the local area including the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners. The MOU identifies the services to be provided as well as the location (address) at which services will be accessible (e.g. comprehensive One-Stop Centers, Affiliate Centers).

- E. Describe how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for core programs and programs carried out by one-stop partners [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(21)]

The Board, core partners and the additional mandated partners in the one-stop system in the Greater Rhode Island region do not have an integrated data system, but they are committed to pursuing alignment and integration of participant and performance data across programs with the goal of providing effective and efficient services that lead to customer employment and retention. The Board intends to explore the potential development and installation of an application programming interface (API) that would allow for back-end communication and interoperability of the various data and MIS systems being utilized among program partners. Such a solution would allow client information to be quickly and securely shared among partner programs, improving the customer service experience by eliminating duplicate processes and questions while simplifying administration, intake, and referral.

- F. Describe any action the local board has taken, or intends to take, in response to by the 2019-2020 Covid-19 outbreak and its related impact on the state. This may include, but not be limited to:
- The integration of virtual or distance learning, or virtual counseling and case management, consistent with recommend social distancing policies;
 - The focus on training participants for specific industries that are essential or important to the Covid-19 response
 - Other revisions or adjustments to programming and service delivery as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the greater RI One-Stop was forced to evolve and adapt direct client services to a socially distant virtual environment. For example; counseling and intake/enrollment for Title I programming are done over the phone and/or through video-conferencing. Both in response to the continued crisis, and as part of its strategy to broaden availability and access to services, the Board will consider expanding the range of virtual/distance offerings to potentially include online/virtual workshops, referrals, and e-training as well as virtual assistance and counseling for customers using Skype/Zoom and other technologies. Any such changes or plans will recognize and account for the technology literacy level of the customers we serve.

As part of the state's continuous response to Covid-19, the Board will also work with industry partnerships to identify those industries and businesses most impacted by COvid-19 or critical to the state's response. While maintaining a focus on customer choice, the Board will endeavor to prioritize training for employment opportunities that not only offer family-sustaining wages and economic security but also aid the larger state effort in recovering from the effects of Covid-19.

4.5 Describe the policy, process, and criteria for issuing individual training accounts (ITAs) including any limitations on ITA amounts. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

Below is the Greater Rhode Island Area's policy and criteria regarding Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):

ITAs are established on behalf of the participant. WIOA Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker participants will use ITAs to purchase training services from eligible providers they select in consultation with the employment counselor. ITA services may be made available to employed and unemployed Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth who have met the eligibility requirements for Individualized Career Services, and have been determined to be unable to obtain or retain employment leading to self-sufficiency through such services.

The participant must have completed an Individual Employment Plan/ Individual Service Strategy that indicates that, through interview, evaluation or assessment, the participant has been determined to be in need of training and has the necessary skills and qualifications to successfully complete the selected training program. Selection of a training program must include the identification that the training is directly linked to occupations that are in demand in the local area, or in another area to which an Adult, Dislocated Worker or Youth is willing to relocate. In determining local demand occupation(s), providers may allow for training in occupations that may have high potential for sustained demand or growth in the local area.

ITAs are limited to participants who (134(c)(3)(A); 20 CFR 680.470):

1. Are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources (including Federal Pell and other federal grants) to pay the cost of their training; or
2. Require assistance beyond that available under grant assistance from other sources (including Federal Pell, GI Bill and other federal grants) to pay the cost of their training.
3. Service providers and training providers must coordinate funds available and make funding arrangements with partner agencies so that WIOA ITA funds supplement Pell and other grant sources to pay for the cost of training.
4. Participants may enroll in ITA funded training while their application for a Pell Grant is pending provided that the service provider has made arrangements with the training provider and the participant regarding the allocation of the Pell Grant, if it is subsequently awarded. If a Pell Grant is awarded, the training provider must reimburse the service provider the ITA funds used to underwrite the tuition portion of the training costs from the PELL Grant.
5. Service providers should consider all available sources of funds, excluding loans, in determining an individual's overall need for WIOA funds. Resources such as PELL, GI Bill and other federal grants should not be included in calculations of the level of WIOA assistance until the grant has been awarded.

Duration, Cost Limits and Availability

1. There is a \$5,500 monetary limit on ITAs.
2. ITAs are awarded per semester, quarter, term, or for uninterrupted training coursework.
3. An individual who has been determined eligible for an ITA may select a training institution/program from the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Unless the program has exhausted funds for the program year.
4. Payments may not be made to a training provider until the service provider ensures that the training provider selected is on the ETPL at time of payment for tuition and fees under WIOA ITAs.

4.6 If training contracts are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

The Greater Rhode Island Area does not presently utilize training contracts. However, we expect to issue policy authorizing such contracts once the State Board passes enabling policy.

4.7 Describe how the local board plans to integrate and connect training resources, including training contracts, with the work of the state's industry and community-based partnerships such as Real Jobs RI and Real Pathways RI.

20 CFR 680.320 states that training contracts may be used only when one or more of the following five exceptions apply, and the local area has fulfilled the consumer choice requirements of § 680.340:

- (1) When the services provided are on-the-job-training (OJT), customized training, incumbent worker training, or transitional jobs.
- (2) When the Local WDB determines that there are an insufficient number of eligible training providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs.
- (3) When the Local WDB determines that there is a training services program of demonstrated effectiveness offered in the area by a community-based organization or another private organization to serve individuals with barriers to employment
- (4) When the Local WDB determines that it would be most appropriate to contract with an institution of higher education (see WIOA sec. 3(28)) or other provider of training services in order to facilitate the training of multiple individuals in in-demand industry sectors or occupations, provided that the contract does not limit consumer choice.
- (5) When the Local WDB is considering entering into a Pay-for-Performance contract, and the Local WDB ensures that the contract is consistent with § 683.510.

With regards to exception 3 above; the Real Pathways RI program has identified multiple partnerships that have demonstrated effectiveness in serving individuals with barriers to employment. Partnerships are typically lead by community-based organizations and must include employer partners as well.

With regards to exception 4 above; the Real Jobs RI program, has identified multiple partnerships in in-demand industry sectors or occupations. Partnerships are collaborations of no fewer than five employers from the same industry, led by a convening entity with industry trust and expertise, which partners with education, workforce development, economic development and community organizations to focus on a set of key priority issues identified by the target industry.

Upon issuance of State Board enabling policy and Local Board authorizing policy, if the Greater Rhode Island Board determines it would be appropriate, in order to meet the needs of employer and job seeker customers, to utilize training contracts, it may contract with such a Real Jobs RI partnership, a Real Pathways RI partnership to pay for cohorts of training for participants, provided the contract does not limit consumer choice.

4.8 Describe process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)]

Assurances that the training is linked to in-demand industry sectors is provided through the state's application process for training providers. As part of the initial and continuing eligibility criteria, the state's ETPL process requires that a training program relate to in-demand industry sectors and occupations. The Local Board assists in the review process for training providers and compares the applicant training programs to the in-demand industries and occupations as published by the state Labor Market Information division and the state's economic development strategy as published by the Commerce Corporation - "Rhode Island Innovates" reports I and II.

4.9 Describe how rapid response activities are coordinated and carried out in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8)]

The Greater Rhode Island area coordinates Rapid Response activities with the Department of Labor and Trainings' Workforce Development Services office. If a WARN notice is issued, workforce development staff jointly mobilize to provide on-site information sessions for employees impacted by a layoff or plant closure. Information surrounding the eligibility and process for applying for Unemployment Compensation (UC) benefits as well as resources available to impacted employees are provided at the initial Rapid Response orientation. Additionally, information surrounding workshops, training opportunities, job locator program services, counseling services for those affected by the loss of their job, information regarding the regional One Stop (America's Job Centers), and information surrounding financial planning and navigation services are made available at the orientation.

4.10 Describe the design framework (such as requirements as described in a Request for Proposals) for youth programs utilized by the local board, and how the required 14 program elements are to be made available within that framework.

Youth services are competitively procured through an open and transparent Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The RFP requires that "Funded programs must be able to provide, either in-house, through collaboration with other organizations (which may or may not be a WIOA-funded provider), or through referral, access to the 14 elements of youth services required under WIOA. Applicants must demonstrate how all 14 required program elements will be made available to participating youth as needed." The RFP footer requires that programs "provide the following required sequence of services in order to ensure that all participants receive comprehensive and individualized services consistent with the WIOA requirements...

- Outreach and Recruitment
- Intake and Eligibility Determination
- Assessment and Referral
- Case Management and Individual Service Strategy Development
- Access to a Range of Services
- Follow-Up Services

Lastly, the RFP includes some additional program priorities of the GRI area including:

- A focus on opportunity youth
- A priority for high quality work-based learning opportunities
- A preference for programs exercising a career pathway model of programming
- A requirement that providers demonstrate strong employer or training provider partnerships.
- A requirement that providers demonstrate how they will incorporate trauma responsive services into their programmatic design.

4.11 Describe the direction provided to the One Stop operator to ensure that priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E).

The local board has issued a priority of service policy that details how priority for adult career and training services is extended to veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. A copy of this policy is provided to the One Stop operator along with practical examples of how the priority should, and should not, be applied.

Section 5: Compliance

Please answer the questions in Section 5 in six (6) pages or less. Most of the response should be staff-driven responses as each are focused on the organization's compliance with federal or state requirements.

5.1 Describe the process for neutral brokerage of adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. Identify the competitive process and criteria (such as targeted services, leverage of funds, etc.) used to award funds to sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services, state the names of contracted organizations, and the duration of each contract. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

The Greater Rhode Island area utilizes the state Department of Labor and Training for the provision of Adult and Dislocated Worker services. With the level of oversight, accountability, nondiscrimination requirements, and internal and fiscal controls in place for a state agency; we believe this ensures that WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services will be provided in a fair, transparent, impartial and high-quality manner.

Youth services are competitively procured through an open and transparent Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The RFP requires that "Funded programs must be able to provide, either in-house, through collaboration with other organizations (which may or may not be a WIOA-funded provider), or through referral, access to the 14 elements of youth services required under WIOA.

The contracted organizations to provide WIOA Youth Services are as follows:

Organization	Total Award	Start Date	End Date
Tri County Community Action Agency	\$269,294.75	Jul 01 2020	Jun 30 2021
Foster Forward	\$91,217.25	Jul 01 2020	Jun 30 2021
East Bay Community Action Program	\$360,600.16	Jul 01 2020	Jun 30 2021
Comprehensive Community Action Program	\$545,693.86	Jul 01 2020	Jun 30 2021
Community Care Alliance	\$233,194.00	Jul 01 2020	Jun 30 2021

5.2 Identify the One-Stop Operator and describe the established procedures for ongoing certification of one-stop operators.

The current One-Stop Operator is The Workplace [350 Fairfield Avenue Bridgeport, CT 06604]. Pursuant to GRI policy PY17-06, One Stop Certifications occur once every three years (the most recent being completed in 2018). A One-Stop Certification Team is established comprised previously of members of the GRI Board, but henceforth comprised of members of the Local Area Advisory Committee. These members were provided worksheets with which they could conduct independent and objective evaluations of the three One-Stop centers in the Greater Rhode Island region, consistent with the One Stop Certification Criteria outlined in State Policy, and the One Stop Certification Standards outlined in Local Policy. The results of these evaluations was then shared with the full board.

5.3 Provide an organization chart as Attachment A that depicts a clear separation of duties between the board and service provision.

Please see Attachment A.

5.4 Provide a complete list of Local Board Membership Roster, including titles and professional associations.

Please see Attachment B.

5.5 Provide the policy and process for nomination and appointment of board members.

Pursuant to [Rhode Island General Laws 42-102-2](#), the Governor's Workforce Board (serving as Local Board for the Greater Rhode Island area under waiver authority granted by the US Secretary of Labor) is appointed by the Governor of the State of Rhode Island, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Nominations are made at the Governor's discretion.

As a condition of the waiver granted by the US Secretary of Labor authorizing the State Board to serve as Local Board for the Greater Rhode Island area, the Board has further created a Local Area Advisory Committee. The Committee is a key vehicle through which the Board can work with local partners and solicit feedback and input from the local area. Appointment to the Advisory Committee is at the discretion of the Board Chair; however as part of an agreement with the Chief Local Elected Officials of the Greater Rhode Island area, nominations for no less than half of the Advisory Committee are received from the local elected officials themselves, facilitated through the League of Cities and Towns. The balance of the Advisory Committee are selected to represent the interests of business, community, families, and labor in the Greater Rhode Island area.

5.6 Provide the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for WIOA within the local area.

The Greater Rhode Island area has designated Talia DeVincenzis as its Local EO Officer:

Talia DeVincenzis
Equal Opportunity Officer
Greater Rhode Island Workforce Development Area
1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 72-2
Cranston, RI 02920
401-462-8209
Talia.DeVincenzis@dlt.ri.gov

5.7 Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15)]

The Greater Rhode Island area utilizes the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training for disbursement of grant funds:

RI Department of Labor and Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920

5.8 Indicate the most recent negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

The negotiated levels are provided below:

WIOA Performance Measures	Greater Rhode Island	
	Final Negotiated Goals	
	PY 20	PY 21
WIOA Adults		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	79.00%	80.00%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	79.00%	80.00%
Median Earnings	\$6,400	\$6,700
Credential Attainment Rate	53.00%	58.00%
Measurable Skill Gains	39.00%	41.00%
WIOA Dislocated Workers		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	79.60%	81.00%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	81.70%	82.20%
Median Earnings	\$7,200.00	\$7,700.00
Credential Attainment Rate	74.50%	76.00%
Measurable Skill Gains	38.00%	39.00%
WIOA Youth		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	70.00%	74.00%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	70.00%	72.00%
Median Earnings	\$3,100.00	\$3,200.00
Credential Attainment Rate	55.50%	57.50%
Measurable Skill Gains	39.00%	40.00%

5.10 Describe indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), contracted service providers and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training is the fiscal agent for the WPGRI. While subject to all the federal rules and regulations associated with being a recipient of federal resources, this relationship also requires adherence to the rules and regulations of the State of Rhode Island. This includes all rules and regulations related to procurement, invoice processing and payroll. All financial transactions for WPGRI are recorded in the Department's Financial Accounting and Reporting System (FARS). This system is audited annually and is the basis for all federal financial reports.

Concerning the performance of services providers and the One Stop system, the Board intends to work with the One Stop Operator on developing KPIs and metrics such as case progression, enrollments and completions, customer satisfaction reports and other key measures to track and monitor the function performance of the One Stop system and its partners.

5.11 Provide a description of the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and the Department of Human Services' Office of Rehabilitation Services with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)]

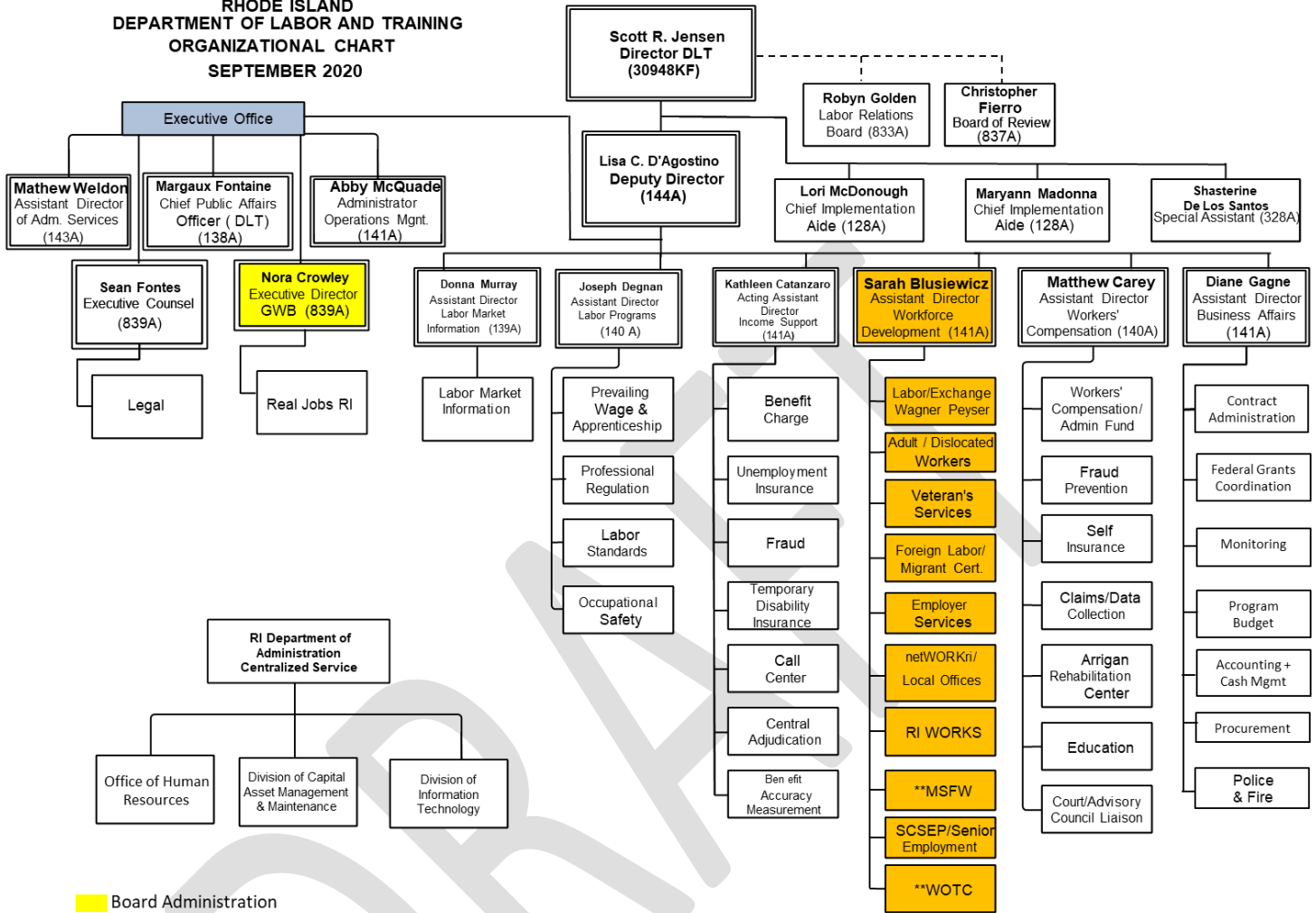
The GRI workforce development area provided the Office of Rehabilitation Services with a Memorandum of Understanding with the intent of coordinating and performing activities and services governing their programs and services. In the MOU, ORS has agreed to work to coordinate access to its services and programs to ensure that the needs of job seekers, youth and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, are addressed and that access to technology and materials are made available. Both parties commit to establishing a cross-referral procedure based upon the availability of funding, services and program need to ensure that high quality and convenient services are available to potentially eligible customers of the career center system. Additionally, ORS agreed to coordinate for the funding of the infrastructure costs of the career centers and the funding of shared services and operating costs in accordance with state issued requirements.

5.12 Describe the process for getting input into the development of the local plan in compliance with WIOA section 108(d) and providing public comment opportunity prior to submission. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plans. If any comments received that represent disagreement with the plan were received, please include those comments here. See Local Plan References and Resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)]

The local plan was developed with input and engagement from the Local Area Advisory Committee of the Governor's Workforce Board, representative of the 37 cities and towns in the Greater Rhode Island Region. In late November the plan was posted on the Workforce Board's website for 30-day public comment. Interested parties received notification that the plan was available for comment. After the 30-day public comment period, all comments received were deidentified and incorporated into Attachment C.

ATTACHMENT A – Organizational Chart

**RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND TRAINING
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
SEPTEMBER 2020**



ATTACHMENT B – Board Membership (as of November 2020)

Pursuant to waiver authority granted by the US Secretary of Labor in his letter dated September 30, 2019 and pending renewal through the waiver request submitted on June 29, 2020; the State Workforce Development Board acts as the Local Workforce Development Board for the Greater Rhode Island area. Appointment of the State Workforce Development Board is addressed in Chapter 42-102 of the Rhode Island General Laws.

Consistent with the conditions of approval for the state waiver request, the State Board ensures local stakeholder interests are represented and engaged by, among other actions, forming a Local Area Advisory Committee that reflects the geographic diversity of the Greater Rhode Island area.

BUSINESS MEMBERS (12)

Mike Grey, Sodexo Food Service [GWB Board Chair]
Jordan Boslego, Sydney Providence and Quay
Maureen Boudreau, Johnson and Johnson
Stephanie Preston, Citizens Bank
Janet Raymond, Providence Chamber of Commerce
Karsten Hart, Newport Restaurant Group
Steve Kitchin, New England Institute of Technology
David Chenevert, RI Manufacturers Association
John Gregory, Northern RI Chamber of Commerce
Katelyn Pisano, Kenzan
Debbie Proffitt, Purvis Defense Systems
Susan Rittscher, Center for Women and Enterprise

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (5)

Stefan Pryor, Rhode Island Commerce Corporation [GWB Board Vice Chair]
Scott Jensen, Department of Labor and Training [Adult; Dislocated Worker; Youth; Wagner-Peyser; Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program; Jobs for Veterans State Grants; Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program; Senior Community Service Employment Program]
Julian Alssid, Community College of Rhode Island
Angelica Infante-Green, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [Adult Education and Family Literacy; Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education]
Courtney Hawkins, Department of Human Services [Vocational Rehabilitation; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families]

WORKFORCE REPRESENTATIVES (6)

Organized Labor

George Nee, RI AFL-CIO
Paul Alvarez, UA Local 51
Paul MacDonald, Providence Central Federated Council
Robin Coia, New England Laborers Labor-Management Coop. Trust

Community

Mario Bueno, Progreso Latino
Cathy Doyle, Year Up